



Cato Institute counterfeit U.S. climate change impacts assessment

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The Cato Institute is expected to release this week a report that has been laid out to appear nearly identical to a 2009 scientific assessment report, *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States*, issued by the U.S. Global Change Research Program and published by Cambridge University Press. The editor of the Cato document says its intended role (beyond the election campaign) is to serve as a “users manual” for future attacks on EPA’s regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. Because of its misleading design and layout throughout, the Cato report can be characterized as a counterfeit, having nothing to do with the USGCRP or the authors of the original report. It was not subjected to the extensive review process that characterized the 2009 report, and its key findings are neither consistent with the original assessment nor with the analysis developed by the great majority of qualified scientists.

U.S. Global Change Research Program, [*Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States*](#)

Cato Institute, [*Addendum: Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States*](#), draft posted online at Cato website, summer 2012

The [Cato Institute](#), based in Washington, DC, is an anti-regulatory ‘libertarian’ policy organization founded by Edward Crane and Charles G. Koch. Its new [Center for the Study of Science](#) is directed by climate science contrarian [Patrick J. Michaels](#), who has been affiliated with Cato for at least two decades. The "Addendum" lists Michaels as Editor-in-Chief. Others named are Robert C. Balling, Mary J. Hutzler, Robert E. Davis, Paul C. Knappenberger, and Craig D. Idso.

This is not the first time climate change disinformation campaigners have mimicked official documents to confuse and mislead people. In 1998, Frederick Seitz et al circulated a petition accompanied by a paper that was intentionally formatted to look like a reprint from the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science (PNAS). Read about it at

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oregon_Petition . The NAS denounced that paper, saying: "*The NAS Council would like to make it clear that this petition has nothing to do with the National Academy of Sciences and that the manuscript was not published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences or in any other peer-reviewed journal.*" See the full [Statement of the NAS, By The Council Of The National Academy Of Sciences Regarding Global Change Petition response of the NAS](#) (April 20, 1998).

If the report is released this week, the timing could certainly be seen as an attempt to influence climate policy debate in the last two weeks of the election campaign, as well as to provide talking points during the post-election congressional session to members of Congress who have aligned themselves with global warming denialism. But beyond the specific timing, the report appears designed to help lay the groundwork for another round of attacks on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 'Endangerment Finding' on greenhouse gases and on EPA's authority to regulate emissions. In a Cato Institute podcast on October 17, [Would \(Could\) Mitt Romney Rein in the EPA?](#), Pat Michaels plugged the forthcoming bogus "Addendum," saying he took the 2009 USGCRP report...

"... and produced a report that is going to be coming out very soon that looks exactly like the report that the EPA relied upon. The new Cato document, which is simply called the Addendum to the USGCRP report looks like it, it flows like it, where there are key findings in the government report we have analogous key findings. And lo and behold, our report contains about 900 endnotes, footnotes, references, etc. And if you look at the report that EPA used [for the endangerment finding, i.e. the USGCRP assessment], that contained a little over 500. You could make the argument that they left out more than half of the science when they produced their report. Now we did this because we know that if

anyone wants the EPA to back off, they have to turn around the endangerment finding. So this is the user's manual to reverse the Endangerment Finding."

Much more can and will be said about this, but for now, let's just note that the EPA Endangerment Finding on greenhouse gases was based on considerably more scientific evidence and climate science assessment than is contained in the single volume *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States* report. Pat is trying to frame the discourse here in multiple misleading ways.

Scott Mandia blogged this: [Is Patrick Michaels Trying to Pass Us a Counterfeit \\$20 Bill?](#)

Peter Sinclair blogged this at Climate Crocks: [How Stupid Does Cato Institute think Congress Is? Oh, right....](#)

The Daily Climate posted this: [Cato's 'Addendum' Tries to Undo Federal Climate Report](#). Excerpt:

A new "addendum" to be released as soon as this week purports to update with the latest science a 2009 federal assessment on the impacts to the United States of climate change.

The addendum matches the layout and design of the original, published by the U.S. Global Change Research Program: Cover art, "key message" sections, table of contents are all virtually identical, down to the chapter heads, fonts and footnotes.

But the new report comes from the conservative Washington, D.C.-based [Cato Institute](#). And its findings —that science is questionable, the impacts negligible and the potential policy solutions ineffective — are more a rebuke than a revision of the original report and of accepted science both then and today.

"It's not an addendum. It's a counterfeit," said [John Abraham](#), an associate professor at the University of Saint Thomas in Minnesota

who studies clean power sources. "It's a continued effort to kick the can down the road: A steady drip, drip, drip of fake reports by false scientists to create a false sense of debate." ...

The first example is on the cover: Both reports show a satellite image of the United States, with a bar-chart showing temperature changes running along the bottom. Yet the original 2009 report graphs the dramatic rise in global temperatures from 1900 through 2008, while the Cato report uses a much smaller subset – temperatures only from the United States, and just from 1991 through 2010 – to show a seemingly random pattern. ...

The 2009 report warned that widespread climate effects are occurring now and are expected to increase. Climate change, it concluded, will "stress water resources" and challenge crop and livestock production. Cato's addendum counters that "observed impacts of climate change have little national significance." ... The science and evidence since 2009 supports the National Climate Center's assessment, however: Military brass are retooling operations and policies for a changed world, while this summer's drought will cost the U.S. economy an estimated \$70 billion to \$100 billion. ...

[Michael MacCracken](#), chief scientist for climate change programs at the Climate Institute who helped review the 2009 report, [said].

"If you hadn't seen the original report, you wouldn't know. They made it look really similar. Why would they do that unless they're trying to mislead?"